

# Cheese & Cheese Product Labeling Guidelines

## NAME OF PRODUCT:

1. “Standard of identity” name or
2. The common or usual name of the food; or
3. An appropriately descriptive term or fanciful name.

The standard of identity must be used if the cheese fits the standard.

Examples:



## Standard of Identity names:

Cheddar Cheese, Monterey Jack Cheese, Low-Moisture Part-Skim Mozzarella Cheese

## Common or Usual Names

String Cheese	Farmers Cheese	Farmers Pepper Cheese
Low-Moisture, Part-Skim Mozzarella Cheese	A Semisoft Part Skim Cheese	A Semisoft Part Skim Cheese with Jalepenos

## Descriptive Names

Co-Jack	Pepper Jack Cheese
A Blend of Colby and Monterey Jack Cheese	Monterey Jack Cheese with Jalepenos
Or	
Co-Jack	Pepper Jack Cheese
A Semisoft Cheese	A semisoft cheese

Spiced or flavored standardized cheeses should be labeled with the spice at the beginning or the end of the cheese name. The spice or flavor name must not be between the cheese variety and the word “cheese”. Examples: Caraway Colby Cheese, Salami Cheddar Cheese, Colby Cheese with Caraway, Cheddar Cheese with Salami.

## (The word cheese must be included in the name of the product)

The name of the product must be in a type size that is 50 % the height of the largest print on the label and generally parallel to the base of the package.

Pasteurized Process Cheese, Cheese Foods, and Cheese Spreads: All **words in the name need to be given equal prominence**. You can not make the word cheese or the variety of the cheese used stand out more than the rest of the name. Any optional ingredients that are required to be declared on the label should not be given greater prominence than the name of the food.

## NET QUANTITY OF CONTENTS:

Must be located on the front of the package (the principal display panel). This includes random weight packages.

Must be stated in US Customary (e.g., pounds and ounces) and metric units EXCEPT for random weight packages that are labeled at retail. These packages are exempt from the requirements for metric units. When a product exceeds 16 ounces, the net quantity of contents needs to be stated in the largest whole unit (e.g., pound, pint, quart, gallon) and the remaining ounces.

## NUTRITION INFORMATION:

### Types of Nutrition Facts panels:

The Full Format Nutrition Facts panel must be used on packages where the available labeling space is **greater than 40 square inches**. Shingle packs of slices, 6 ounce cups of shredded cheese, half moon blocks, large wedges are all package sizes that usually fit this size requirement.

If less than 40 square inches of label space, the following are allowed in descending order of preference.

1. The column (vertical) display. The table at the bottom is replaced with a sentence stating, "Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet."
2. The tabular display
2. The linear (or string) format of the Nutrition Facts panel. Linear may only be used on packages when the package **cannot** accommodate a tabular display on any panel.

Please note that cheese companies in particular are using the linear format with increasing frequency because they prefer how it looks on the label. This is undesirable and does not comply with NLEA requirements. The label is often designed this way because the companies do not want to use two labels. Remember that Nutrition Facts panels are based on the total available labeling space **on the package**. For cheese, this is the wrapped block minus the seams.

## SERVING SIZE

When using ounces for the serving size, a visual description must be used e.g. 1 ounce (28 g/about 1" cube). For random weight packages, the servings per container should be stated as "varied."

For exact weight packages, servings per container should equal the net weight divided by the serving size. The servings should be rounded to the nearest whole number except those that are between 2 and 5 servings should be rounded to the nearest 0.5 servings. Rounding should be indicated by the word "about."

## INGREDIENTS STATEMENT:

Ingredients must be listed in descending order of predominance by weight (most to least).  
Must use full standard of identity names and common or usual names of the ingredients.

### Common or Usual Names for Typical Ingredients Used in Dairy Products

Ingredient	Common or Usual Name
skim milk, concentrated skim milk, reconstituted skim, and nonfat dry milk	"skim milk" or "nonfat milk" milk
milk, concentrated milk, reconstituted milk, and dry whole milk	"milk"
bacteria culture	"cultured ____"(the blank is filled in with the name of the milk used)
sweetcream buttermilk, concentrated sweetcream buttermilk, reconstituted sweetcream buttermilk and dried sweetcream buttermilk	"buttermilk "
whey, concentrated whey, reconstituted whey and dried whey	"whey"
cream, reconstituted cream, dried cream and plastic cream and concentrated milk fat	"cream"
butteroil and anhydrous butterfat	"butterfat"
enzymes of animal, plant and microbial origin	"enzyme"
cheese whey, concentrated cheese whey and dried cheese whey	"whey"
cheddar cheese, washed curd cheese, colby cheese granular cheese and any mixture of two or more	"American cheese"

All sub-ingredients must be listed.

Do not use extra words in the ingredient statement e.g. diced (as in diced peppers), whole (as in whole milk), fresh (as in fresh basil)

All added colors result in an artificially colored food. No added color can be declared as “food” or “natural” color. Cheese cannot be called “natural” if it has annatto color.

Food ingredients such as garlic, onion and celery cannot be included under the collective term “spice.” They must be listed individually.

“Herb” and “herbs” can not be used as collective terms in an ingredient statement. Use the word “spice” or list all spices by name.